

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested. Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 31-33 and 51-68 are pending, with claims 31, 57 and 66 being the independent claims. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all outstanding rejections and objections.

Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1-11, 19-22, 27-31 and 33-50 were rejected on the ground of nonstatutory double patenting over the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,385,541 (“the ‘541 patent”). The Examiner asserts that although the claims in the ‘541 patent are not identical to the claims in this application, “they are not patentably distinct from each other because Claims 2-4 of U.S. Patent No. 6,385,541 are a broader form of Claims 1, 7, 29, 31, 34 and 43 of the instant application and therefore the differences between the claims would be an obvious variation of Claims 2-4 seen in U.S. Patent No. 6,385,541.” A Terminal Disclaimer is being submitted with this amendment. Accordingly, the Applicants request that the nonstatutory double patenting rejection be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 7, 8 and 19-22 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,831,664 to Wharton et al. (“Wharton”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,115,611 to Kimoto et al. (“Kimoto”) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,973,432 to Woodward et al. (“Woodward”).

Claims 4, 5, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wharton in views of Kimoto and Woodward and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,009,413 to Webber et al. (“Webber”).

Claims 6 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wharton in views of Kimoto, Woodward and U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0092450 A1 to Juppi et al. (“Juppi”).

Claims 29, 30, 34-36, 40-44 and 48-50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wharton in view of Kimoto.

Claims 37, 38, 45 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wharton in view of Kimoto and further in view of Webber.

Claims 39 and 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wharton in view of Kimoto and further in view of Webber and Juppi.

Claim Objections

Claims 31-33 were objected to as having allowable subject matter, but have a nonstatutory double patenting rejection.

Independent Claim 1 and its Dependent Claims

Without acquiescing to the rejection, claim 1 and its dependent claims, claims 2-6, 19, 20 and 27, have been canceled to advance prosecution of this application. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claim 1 and its dependent claims in a continuation application. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims is moot.

Independent Claim 7 and its Dependent Claims

Without acquiescing to the rejection, claim 7 and its dependent claims, claims 8-11, 21, 22 and 28, have been canceled to advance prosecution of this application. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claim 7 and its dependent claims in a continuation application. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 7 and its dependent claims is moot.

Independent Claim 29 and its Dependent Claim

Without acquiescing to the rejection, claim 29 and its dependent claim 30 have been canceled to advance prosecution of this application. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claim 34 and its dependent claims in a continuation application. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 29 and its dependent claims is moot.

Independent Claim 31 and its Dependent Claims

Independent claim 31 and its dependent claims, claims 32 and 33, were indicated by the Examiner as having allowable subject matter. As stated above, a Terminal Disclaimer is being submitted with this amendment. Accordingly, claim 31 and its dependent claims, claims 32, 33 and new claims 51-56 are in condition for allowance.

Independent Claim 34 and its Dependent Claims

Without acquiescing to the rejection, claim 34 and its dependent claims, claims 35-42, have been canceled to advance prosecution of this application. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claim 34 and its dependent claims in a continuation application. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 34 and its dependent claims is moot.

Independent Claim 43 and its Dependent Claims

Without acquiescing to the rejection, claim 43 and its dependent claims, claims 44-50, have been canceled to advance prosecution of this application. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter of claim 43 and its dependent claims in a continuation application. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 43 and its dependent claims is moot.

New Independent claim 57 and its Dependent Claims

New independent claim 57 includes the subject matter of claim 31 (which was indicated by the Examiner as allowable), but in a method format. Accordingly, with submission of the Terminal Disclaimer mentioned above, new claim 57 and its dependent claims, claims 58-65, are also in condition for allowance.

New Independent claim 66 and its Dependent Claims

New independent claim 66 includes the subject matter of claim 31 (which was indicated by the Examiner as allowable), but from the information system perspective. Accordingly, with submission of the Terminal Disclaimer mentioned above, new claim 66 and its dependent claims, claims 67 and 68, are also in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection in the Office Action have been properly traversed or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all outstanding rejections and objections. Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

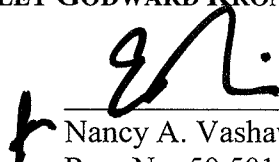
Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,
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